ICS-100: Introduction to ICS for Healthcare/Hospitals
Course Summary

Course Welcome

The Emergency Management Institute developed IS 100, Introduction to ICS for Healthcare/Hospitals to provide fundamentals training on the Incident Command System (ICS) to healthcare and hospital professionals.

IS-100 follows the National Incident Management System (NIMS) guidelines and meets the NIMS Baseline Training Requirements for IS-100.

This is the first in a series of ICS courses designed to meet all-hazard, all-agency NIMS ICS requirements for operational personnel. Descriptions and details about the other ICS courses in the series may be found on our web site: http://training.fema.gov.

This course introduces the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS). At the end of this course, you should be familiar with:

- The major ICS functions and their primary responsibilities.
- The major incident facilities and the function of each.
- What an Incident Action Plan is and how it is used at an incident.
- The common responsibilities associated with incident assignments.

Lesson 1: Welcome/ICS Overview

Lesson Overview

The **Welcome/ICS Overview** lesson introduces you to:

- The background and development of ICS.
- ICS as the standard for incident management across the country.
- ICS as interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible.
- Illustrations of ICS applications in healthcare situations.
- ICS as a key feature of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Lesson 1 Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the background of ICS.
- Describe how ICS relates to NIMS.
- Identify how ICS can be used by healthcare organizations.
- Identify three purposes of ICS.

ICS for Hospitals and Healthcare Systems

ICS is widely used in the emergency services community by such agencies as fire, police, and emergency medical services. In view of recent events and the potential threats to our infrastructure, it is important for healthcare organizations to participate in the planning and response to crisis situations. The formal adoption of ICS by healthcare organizations will result in many benefits, including:

- **Greater Efficiency** - Since ICS is designed for use by trained personnel to direct and coordinate efforts in a crisis situation, healthcare organizations will be able to more efficiently manage both internal and external crises.

- **Better Coordination** - Healthcare organizations will be able to better coordinate with outside agencies and organizations during a crisis if ICS is implemented.

- **More Effective Communication** - Healthcare organizations will be able to more effectively communicate with outside agencies and organizations when they use common terminology. Using common titles for command and general staff positions facilitates communications with external, local responders.

The Incident Command System (ICS)

An incident is an occurrence, caused by either human actions or natural phenomena, that requires response actions to prevent or minimize loss of life, or damage to property and/or the environment.

Examples of incidents include:

- Fire, both structural and wildland.
- Natural disasters, such as tornadoes, floods, ice storms or earthquakes.
- Human and animal disease outbreaks.
- Search and rescue missions.
- Hazardous materials incidents.
- Criminal acts and crime scene investigations.
- Terrorist incidents, including the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- National Special Security Events, such as Presidential visits or the Super Bowl.
- Other planned events, such as parades or demonstrations.

Given the magnitude of these types of events, it's not always possible for any one agency or organization alone to handle the management and resource needs.

Partnerships are often required among local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies. These partners must work together in a smooth, coordinated effort under the same management system.

The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, all-hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

ICS has considerable internal flexibility. It can grow or shrink to meet different needs. This flexibility makes it a very cost effective and efficient management approach for both small and large situations.

The Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) is one example of how ICS can be adapted to suit particular disciplines.

History of the Incident Command System (ICS)

The Incident Command System (ICS) was developed in the 1970s following a series of catastrophic fires in California's urban interface. Property damage ran into the millions, and many people died or were injured. The personnel assigned to determine the causes of this disaster studied the case histories and discovered that response problems could rarely be attributed to lack of resources or failure of tactics. What were the lessons learned?

Surprisingly, studies found that response problems were far more likely to result from inadequate management than from any other single reason.

Weaknesses in incident management were often due to:

- Lack of accountability, including unclear chains of command and supervision.
- Poor communication due to both inefficient uses of available communications systems and conflicting codes and terminology.
- Lack of an orderly, systematic planning process.
- No common, flexible, predesigned management structure that enables commanders to delegate responsibilities and manage workloads efficiently.
- No predefined methods to integrate interagency requirements into the management structure and planning process effectively.

A poorly managed incident response can be devastating to our economy and our health and safety. With so much at stake, we must effectively manage our response efforts. The Incident Command System, or ICS, allows us to do so. ICS is a proven management system based on successful business practices. This course introduces you to basic ICS concepts and terminology.

National Incident Response System (NIMS)

In response to attacks on September 11, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) in February 2003.

HSPD-5 called for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and identified steps for improved coordination of Federal, State, local, and private industry response to incidents and described the way these agencies and organizations will prepare for such a response.

The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security announced the establishment of NIMS in March 2004. One of the key features of NIMS is the Incident Command System.

Healthcare's Use of ICS

ICS is part of the organization's all-hazards emergency management program that includes mitigation (including prevention), preparedness, response, and recovery activities. ICS is used to manage the response and recovery activities.

Using ICS concepts and principles enables organizations to meet one component of NIMS compliance and promotes collaborative participation in a larger, national system. NIMS promotes a coordinated effort among all primary and secondary response agencies to better prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from events and incidents.

Many healthcare organizations have incorporated ICS into their emergency management programs since 2001 to comply with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) standards.

NIMS Compliance for Healthcare Organizations

Compliance with NIMS is a condition for any healthcare organization receiving Federal assistance, including grants and contracts from such agencies as the Human Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

NIMS compliance involves a series of activities aimed at improving institutional preparedness and integration with a community-based response system. Some of the compliance requirements include engaging in preparedness efforts, resource management, communications and information management, supporting technologies, and training and exercises.

More information on NIMS and its compliance requirements can be found on the NIMS Web site: www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/imp_hos.pdf.

ICS and the Hospital Incident Command System (HICS)

Hospital emergency preparedness efforts have been influenced for decades by a variety of Federal, State, and local regulations and non-governmental guidelines which must be addressed in a hospital's emergency management program.

In response to these requirements, a group of hospitals in the early 1990s developed the Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS) as a foundation for preparing for and responding to various types of disasters. The latest version of HEICS, renamed the Hospital Incident Command System (HICS), reflects consistency with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Hospitals are not required to use HICS. It is only one of several models that present ICS for hospitals.

The Hospital Incident Command System (HICS)

HICS was developed by a National Work Group of hospital subject matter experts from across the US representing all hospital types and government representatives from FEMA, the Department of Health and Human Services/Human Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), and the American Hospital Association (AHA)/American Society for Healthcare Engineering.

HICS provides guidance for developing a hospital Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and for adopting a flexible incident management system, with the goal of helping hospitals of all sizes better prepare for and respond to both emergency and non-emergency incidents.

In its evolution from HEICS to HICS, the system changed to:

- Expand the fundamental concepts of HEICS.
- Clarify system components and its relationship to NIMS.
- Broaden its response capability to a wider array of incident type.
- Incorporate new hospital practices in emergency management.
- Establish a closer alignment with community partners through the incorporation of NIMS, released March 2004, and the NIMS Implementation Activities for Hospitals and Healthcare Systems, released September 2006.

ICS is Built on Best Practices

ICS is:

- A proven management system based on successful business and military practices.
- The result of decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents.

ICS has been tested in more than 30 years of emergency and nonemergency applications, by all levels of government and in the private sector. It represents organizational "best practices," and as a component of NIMS has become the standard for emergency management across the country.

NIMS requires the use of ICS for all domestic responses. NIMS also requires that all levels of government, including Territories and tribal governments, adopt ICS as a condition for receiving Federal preparedness funding.

What ICS is Designed To Do

Designers of the system recognized early that ICS must be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible to meet the following management challenges:

- Meet the needs of incidents of any kind or size.
- Allow personnel from a variety of agencies and organizations to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provide logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- Be cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

ICS consists of procedures for controlling personnel, facilities, equipment, and communications. It is a system designed to be used or applied from the time an incident occurs until the requirement for management and operations no longer exists.

Remember that ICS is separate from a hospital's day-to-day organizational structure. ICS is used during specific events and incidents, and is not intended to replace a hospital's existing organizational structure.

Applications for the Use of ICS

Applications for the use of ICS by healthcare organizations include both planned events, such as exercises, and incidents, such as bioterrorist attacks. As the organization works through the NIMS compliance process, ICS will be incorporated within the overall emergency management program. This means that ICS will become the method that is used to manage limited response emergencies (such as a child abduction) to major ones (such as evacuations or mass casualty events).

Since ICS may be used for small or large events, it can grow or shrink to meet the changing demands of an incident or event.

Additional Resources

For more information on NIMS implementation activities for hospitals and healthcare systems, consult the following resources:

- The National Incident Management System (NIMS) (http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/NIMS-90-web.pdf).

- HSPD-5 in its entirety (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030228-9.html).

- The Emergency Management (EM) Principles and Practices for Healthcare Systems (http://www1.va.gov/emshg/page.cfm?pg=122).

- The HICS Implementation Manual (http://www.emsa.ca.gov/hics/hics.asp).

Lesson Summary

You have completed the Welcome/ICS Overview lesson. This lesson addressed how:

- ICS has become a standard best practice for the management of both planned events and incidents.
- Designers of ICS recognized that it must be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible.
- Applications of ICS have included planned events, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism.
- One of the key features of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is the ICS.

The next lesson will provide an overview of the features and principles of ICS.

Lesson 2: ICS Features & Principles

Lesson Overview

The **ICS Features and Principles** lesson introduces you to:

- ICS management principles.
- ICS key features.
- Common ICS responsibilities.

Lesson 2 Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the basic features of ICS.
- Identify the principle ICS facilities.
- Identify facility map symbols.

- Describe common responsibilities for responding to an incident.
- List individual accountability responsibilities.
- Describe common mobilization and demobilization responsibilities.

ICS Features

As you learned in the previous lesson, ICS is based on proven management principles, which contribute to the strength and efficiency of the overall system.

ICS principles are implemented through a wide range of management features including the use of common terminology and clear text, and a modular organizational structure.

ICS emphasizes effective planning, including management by objectives and reliance on an Incident Action Plan.

ICS helps ensure full utilization of all incident resources by:

- Maintaining a manageable span of control.
- Establishing predesignated incident locations and facilities.
- Implementing resource management practices.
- Ensuring integrated communications.

The ICS features related to command structure include chain of command and unity of command, as well as unified command and transfer of command. Formal transfer of command occurs whenever leadership changes.

Through accountability and mobilization, ICS helps ensure that resources are on hand and ready.

And, finally, ICS supports responders and decision makers by providing the data they need through effective information management.

This lesson covers each of these ICS features in detail.

Common Terminology and Clear Text

The ability to communicate within the ICS is absolutely critical. An essential method for ensuring the ability to communicate is by using common terminology and clear text.

A critical part of any effective incident management system is for all communications to be in plain English. That is, **use clear text. Do not use radio codes, organization-specific codes, or jargon.**

For example, many hospitals use color-coded standard operating procedures (SOPs) for specific types of incidents, such as code pink for a baby abduction. Such procedures do **not** comply with the "plain speak" guidance of ICS.

ICS establishes common terminology allowing diverse incident management and support entities to work together. Common terminology helps to define:

- **Organizational Functions:** Major functions and functional units with incident management responsibilities are named and defined. Terminology for the organizational elements involved is standard and consistent.
- **Resource Descriptions:** Major resources (personnel, facilities, and equipment/ supply items) are given common names and are "typed" or categorized by their capabilities. This helps to avoid confusion and to enhance interoperability.
- **Incident Facilities:** Common terminology is used to designate incident facilities.
- **Position Titles:** ICS management or supervisory positions are referred to by titles, such as Officer, Chief, Director, Supervisor, or Leader.

Each of the above areas will be covered in more detail in this and the remaining lessons.

Modular Organization

The ICS organizational structure develops in a top-down, modular fashion that is based on the size and complexity of the incident, as well as the specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident. As incident complexity increases, the organization expands from the top down as functional responsibilities are delegated.

The ICS organizational structure is flexible. When needed, separate functional elements can be established and subdivided to enhance internal organizational management and external coordination. As the ICS organizational structure expands, the number of management positions also expands to adequately address the requirements of the incident.

In ICS, only those functions or positions necessary for a particular incident will be filled.

Management by Objectives

During the NIMS compliance process, ICS will be incorporated in the organization's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for priority hazards. This guidance is used in the early phases to "start" the response to an event. As part of that initial response phase, ICS is implemented through identifying an initial Incident Commander, who identifies objectives to guide response activities. This is how the incident action planning process begins. The process consists of the following steps:

Step 1: Understand organization policy and direction.
Step 2: Assess incident situation.
Step 3: Establish incident objectives.
Step 4: Select appropriate strategy or strategies to achieve objectives.
Step 5: Perform tactical direction (applying tactics appropriate to the strategy, assigning the right resources, and monitoring their performance).
Step 6: Provide necessary followup (changing strategy or tactics, adding or subtracting resources, etc.).

This "management by objectives" approach is used to communicate functional actions throughout the entire ICS organization.

Reliance on an Incident Action Plan (IAP)

In ICS, considerable emphasis is placed on developing effective Incident Action Plans.

An Incident Action Plan (IAP) can be an oral or written plan. It reflects the overall strategy for managing an incident within a prescribed timeframe called an **Operational Period**. An IAP includes the identification of operational resources and assignments and may include attachments that provide additional direction.

At the simplest level, all Incident Action Plans must have four elements:

- What do we want to do and how are we going to do it?
- Who is responsible for doing it?
- How do we communicate with each other?
- What is the procedure if incident personnel are injured?

Written Incident Action Plan

All levels of a growing organization must have a clear understanding of the tactical actions for the next operational period. It is recommended that written plans be used whenever:

- Oral plans could result in the miscommunication of critical information.
- Two or more jurisdictions or disciplines are involved.
- Large changes of personnel occur by operational periods.
- Personnel are working across more than one operational period.
- There is a full activation of the ICS organization.
- The incident has important legal, political, or public ramifications.
- Complex communication issues arise.
- A written record of actions taken is needed for historical or administrative needs.

Written Incident Action Plans are required for all HazMat incidents. In addition, the Incident Commander may direct the organization to develop a written Incident Action Plan at any time.

Documenting the Plan

In ICS, an Incident Briefing Form is used to record initial actions and list assigned and available resources. For example, during initial actions, the outgoing Incident Commander would brief the incoming Incident Commander using the Initial Briefing Form, ICS-201, during the transition meeting. As incidents grow in complexity and/or size, ICS provides a format and a systematic process for the development of a written Incident Action Plan.

Four essential elements of a plan are:

- Incident Objectives (ICS 202)
- Organization Assignment List (ICS 203)
- Division Assignment List(s) (ICS 204)
- Supporting Documents

Developing Incident Objectives

The initial step in the incident action planning process is to develop the incident objectives. The Incident Commander must develop incident objectives within a short timeframe after assuming command. After the incident objectives are clear, strategies and tasks to achieve the objectives can begin to be developed. Some objectives will change over the course of the incident. Some objectives will be achieved and new objectives will be developed. Strategies will also change.

The Incident Objectives are documented and displayed in ICS Form 202.

Manageable Span of Control

Another basic ICS feature concerns the supervisory structure of the organization.

Span of control pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during emergency response incidents or special events. Maintaining an effective span of control is particularly important on incidents where safety and accountability are a top priority.

Span of control is the key to effective and efficient incident management. The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources all influence span of control considerations.

Maintaining adequate span of control throughout the ICS organization is very important.

Effective span of control on incidents may vary from three (3) to seven (7), and **a ratio of one (1) supervisor to five (5) reporting elements is recommended**.

If the number of reporting elements falls outside of these ranges, expansion or consolidation of the organization may be necessary. There may be exceptions, usually in lower-risk assignments or where resources work in close proximity to each other.

Predesignated Incident Locations and Facilities

Incident activities may be accomplished from a variety of operational locations and support facilities. Facilities will be identified and established by the Incident Commander depending on the requirements and complexity of the incident or event.

It is important to know and understand the names and functions of the principal ICS facilities.

Incident Facilities

The **Incident Command Post**, or ICP, is the location from which the Incident Commander oversees all incident operations. There is generally only one ICP for each incident or event, but it may change locations during the event. Every incident or event must have some form of an ICP. It may be located in a vehicle, trailer, tent, or within a building. The ICP will be positioned outside of the present and potential hazard zone but close enough to the incident to maintain command. It will be designated by the name of the incident, e.g., City General ICP.

Staging Areas are temporary locations at an incident where personnel and equipment are kept while waiting for tactical assignments. A **Labor Pool** is a specific type of staging area for medical and non-medical personnel within the ICS application for healthcare organizations. The resources in the Staging Area/Labor Pool are **always** in available status. Staging Areas/Labor Pools should be located close enough to the incident for a timely response, but far enough away to be out of the immediate impact zone. There may be more than one Staging Area/Labor Pool at an incident. Staging Areas/Labor Pools can be co-located with the ICP, Helibases, or Helispots.
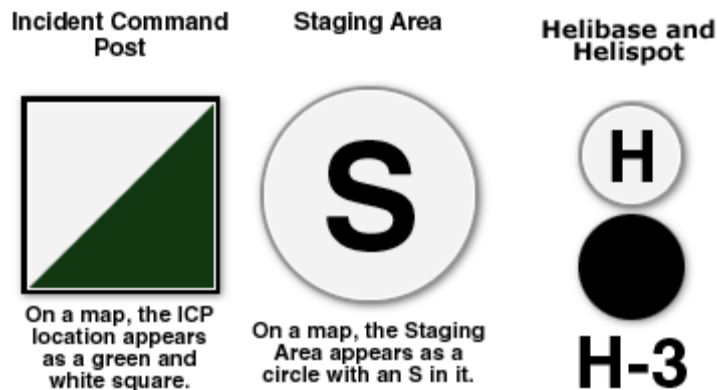
A **Helibase** is the location from which helicopter-centered air operations are conducted, mainly for field operations. Helibases are generally used on a more long-term basis and include such services as fueling and maintenance. The Helibase is usually designated by the name of the incident (e.g., Trail Creek Helibase).

Helispots are more relevant to hospitals and healthcare organizations. Helispots may be either fixed, pre-constructed locations (such as a hospital's helipad) or temporary locations adjacent to the healthcare facility, where helicopters can safely land and take off. Multiple helispots may be used.

For large incidents involving multiple organizations and government agencies, there may also be an **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**. The EOC is a multi-agency coordination center that provides support and coordination to the on-scene responders.

Incident Facilities Map Symbols

In ICS, it is important to be able to identify the map symbols associated with the basic incident facilities. The map symbols used to represent each of the principle ICS facilities are:

Incident Command Post
On a map, the ICP location appears as a green and white square.

Staging Area
On a map, the Staging Area appears as a circle with an S in it.

Helibase and Helispot

Resource Management

ICS resources can be factored into two categories:

- **Tactical Resources:** Personnel and major items of equipment that are available or potentially available to the Operations function on assignment to incidents are called tactical resources.
- **Support Resources:** All other resources required to support the incident. Food, communications equipment, tents, supplies, and fleet vehicles are examples of support resources.

Tactical resources are always classified as one of the following:

- **Assigned:** Assigned resources are working on an assignment under the direction of a Supervisor.
- **Available:** Available resources are assembled, have been issued their equipment, and are ready for immediate assignment.
- **Out-Of-Service:** Out-of-service resources are not ready for available or assigned status.

Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date picture of resource utilization is a critical component of resource management.

Resource management includes processes for:

- Categorizing resources.
- Ordering resources.
- Dispatching resources.
- Tracking resources.
- Recovering resources.

It also includes processes for reimbursement for resources, as appropriate.

Integrated Communications

The use of a common communications plan is essential for ensuring that responders can communicate with one another during an incident. Communication equipment, procedures, and systems must operate across jurisdictions (interoperability).

Developing an integrated voice and data communications system, including equipment, systems, and protocols, must occur prior to an incident.

Effective ICS communications include three elements:

- **Modes:** The "hardware" systems that transfer information.
- **Planning:** Planning for the use of all available communications resources.
- **Networks:** The procedures and processes for transferring information internally and externally.

Additional Information: Integrated Communications

Integrated Communications: Modes

It is not unusual for the communications needs on large incidents to outstrip available radio frequency resources.

Some incidents are conducted entirely without radio support. In such situations, other communications resources—cell phones, alpha pagers, e-mail, secure phone lines, etc.—may be used as the only communication methods for the incident.

Integrated Communications: Planning

Every incident needs a Communications Plan. The plan can be simple and stated orally, or it can be complex and written. An Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS Form 205) is a component of the written Incident Action Plan.

An awareness of available communications resources, combined with an understanding of incident requirements, will enable the Communications Unit Leader to develop an effective Communications Plan.

Integrated Communications: Networks

At a minimum, any communication network must:

- Link supervisory personnel within the Operations Section to each other and to the Incident Commander.
- Provide the ability to communicate among resources assigned to tactical elements such as Branches, Divisions/Groups, and ground-to-air and air-to-air assets.
- Provide a link to the rest of the organization for resource status changes, logistical support, etc.

Chain of Command and Unity of Command

In the Incident Command System:

- **Chain of command** means that there is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels.
- **Unity of command** means that every individual is accountable to only one designated supervisor to whom they report during an incident.

The principles clarify reporting relationships and eliminate the confusion caused by multiple, conflicting directives. Incident managers at all levels must be able to control the actions of all personnel under their supervision. These principles do not apply to the exchange of information. Although orders must flow through the chain of command, members of the organization may directly communicate with each other to ask for or share information.

The command function may be carried out in two ways:

- As a **Single Command** in which the Incident Commander has complete responsibility for incident management. For example, a Single Command would be used when a hospital is managing an influx of patients resulting from a nearby passenger train derailment.

- As a **Unified Command** in which hospitals and non-healthcare organizations with responsibility for the incident share incident management. For example, a Unified Command structure would be used when a fire department was assisting a hospital with the evacuation of patients and employees as a result of severe damage to the building. Under such circumstances, the Unified Command would include the hospital and the fire department.

Transfer of Command

The process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander to another is called **Transfer of Command**. Transfer of Command may take place when:

- A more qualified person assumes command.
- Changing command makes good sense, e.g., an Incident Management Team takes command of an incident from a local jurisdictional unit due to increased incident complexity.
- There is normal turnover of personnel on long or extended incidents, i.e., to accommodate work/rest requirements.
- The incident response is concluded and incident responsibility is transferred back to the home agency.

The transfer of command process always includes a transfer of command briefing, which may be oral, written, or a combination of both. The briefing covers such topics as the current situation, response needs, and available resources.

Accountability

Effective accountability during incident operations is essential at all jurisdictional levels and within individual functional areas. Accountability refers to one's personal choice and willingness to contribute to the outcome of an incident. Individuals must abide by their organization's policies and guidelines and any applicable local, tribal, State, or Federal rules and regulations. The following guidelines must be adhered to:

- **Check-In:** All responders, regardless of organization affiliation, must report in to receive an assignment in accordance with the procedures established by the Incident Commander.
- **Incident Action Plan:** Response operations must be directed and coordinated as outlined in the IAP.
- **Unity of Command:** Each individual involved in incident operations will be assigned to only one supervisor.
- **Span of Control:** Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.
- **Resource Tracking:** Supervisors must record and report resource status changes as they occur.

Mobilization

At any incident or event, the situation must be assessed and response planned. Resources must be organized, assigned, and directed to accomplish the incident

objectives. As they work, resources must be managed to adjust to changing conditions.

Managing resources safely and effectively is the most important consideration at an incident. Therefore, personnel and equipment should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority.

Information and Intelligence Management

The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence is an important component of ICS. The incident management organization must establish a process for gathering, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.

Intelligence includes not only national security or other types of classified information, but also other sensitive, operational information that may come from a variety of different sources, such as:

- Risk assessments.
- Medical intelligence (i.e., surveillance).
- Weather information.
- Geospatial data.
- Structural designs.
- Toxic contaminant levels.
- Utilities and public works data.

For example, hospitals and healthcare systems may receive intelligence from government agencies pertaining to a scheduled high-profile event, such as government officials visiting a hospital. Or hospitals may exchange public health intelligence and information with other organizations to track cases of an e-coli outbreak.

Common Responsibilities

You should now be familiar with the core system features of ICS. In this section, you'll learn about your responsibilities.

The next screens review the **common responsibilities associated with ICS assignments**. You will receive additional training and guidance on your specific duties.

General Guidelines — Lengthy Assignments

Many internal or local incidents last only a short time, and may not require travel. However, sometimes healthcare professionals and hospital personnel may need to respond to a more lengthy assignment away from home. For example, after

Hurricane Katrina, many healthcare professionals deployed to the affected area to help treat victims.

Below are general guidelines for incidents requiring extended stays or travel:

- Determine appropriate travel authorizations.
- Familiarize yourself with travel and transportation arrangements.
- Determine your return mode of transportation (if possible).
- Determine payroll procedures (at incident or through home agency).
- If you are going on a foreign assignment, be sure to take your passport.
- Assemble a travel kit containing any special technical information (e.g., maps, manuals, contact lists, and reference materials).
- Prepare personal items needed for your estimated length of stay, including medications, cash, credit cards, etc.
- Ensure that family members know your destination and how to contact you.

General Guidelines – Roles and Authorities

It is important to understand your role and responsibilities during an emergency. Prior to an event, you should discuss with your supervisor how your organizational unit supports the overall response effort. If you are assigned a role in the organization's ICS structure, then:

- Review your emergency assignment. Know who you will report to and what your position will be.
- Establish a clear understanding of your decision-making authority.
- Determine communications procedures for contacting your headquarters or home office (if necessary).
- Identify purchasing authority and procedures.

Check-In at the Incident: Activities

Check-in officially logs you in at the incident. The check-in process and information helps to:

- Ensure personnel accountability.
- Track resources.
- Prepare personnel for assignments and reassignments.
- Locate personnel in case of an emergency.
- Establish personnel time records and payroll documentation.
- Plan for releasing personnel.
- Organize the demobilization process.

Check-In at the Incident: Locations

Check in only once. Check-in locations may be found at several incident facilities, including:

- Incident Command Post.
- Staging Area/Labor Pool.
- Helibase.
- Division/Group Supervisor (for direct assignment).

Note that these locations may not all be activated at every incident.

Healthcare providers reporting to support another healthcare institution should always bring copies of their licenses and competency folders.

Initial Incident Briefing

After check-in, locate your incident supervisor and obtain your initial briefing. The briefing information helps you plan your tasks and communicate with others. Briefings received and given should include:

- Current situation assessment.
- Identification of your specific job responsibilities.
- Identification of coworkers.
- Location of work area.
- Location of Staging Area/Labor Pool.
- Identification of eating and sleeping arrangements, as appropriate.
- Procedural instructions for obtaining additional supplies, services, and personnel.
- Operational periods/work shifts.
- Required safety procedures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as appropriate.

Incident Recordkeeping

All incidents require some form of recordkeeping. Requirements vary depending upon the organizations involved and the nature of the incident. Detailed information on using ICS forms will be covered in other training sessions.

Below are general guidelines for incident recordkeeping:

- Print or type all entries.
- Enter dates by month/day/year format.
- Use military 24-hour time.
- Enter date and time on all forms and records. Use local time.
- Fill in all blanks. Use N/A as appropriate.
- Section Chiefs and above assign recordkeeper (scribe).

If you are expected to be a supervisor:

- You must maintain a daily Unit Log (ICS-214), indicating the names of personnel assigned and a listing of the major activities that occurred during the operational periods to which you were assigned.
- You are expected to give briefings to your subordinates, adjacent forces, and replacement personnel.

Communications Discipline

Important considerations related to communications include:

- Observing strict radio/telephone procedures.
- Using plain English in all communications. Codes should not be used in radio transmissions. Limit the use of discipline-specific jargon, especially on interdisciplinary incidents.
- Limiting radio and telephone traffic to essential information only. Plan what you are going to say.
- Following procedures for secure communications as required.

Personal Conduct

Sexual harassment or discrimination of any type and the use of illegal drugs and/or alcohol are prohibited on all incidents. Report all such activities to your supervisor.

Often times, incident response can produce high stress situations. As part of your responsibilities, you may be required to interact with people who have been adversely affected by the incident. It is important to be patient and act in a professional manner at all times.

Incident Demobilization

Incident requirements for demobilization may vary considerably. General demobilization guidelines for all personnel are to:

- Complete all work assignments and required forms/reports.
- Brief replacements, subordinates, and supervisor.
- Evaluate the performance of subordinates.
- Follow incident and organization check-out procedures.
- Provide adequate followup contact information.
- Return any incident-issued equipment or other nonexpendable supplies.
- Complete postincident reports, critiques, evaluations, and medical followup.
- Complete all payment and/or payroll issues or obligations.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **ICS Features & Principles** lesson. This lesson introduced:

- ICS management principles.
- ICS key features.
- Common ICS responsibilities.

The next lesson will provide an overview of the ICS organization and introduce the Incident Commander and Command Staff.

Lesson 3: ICS Organization: Part I

Lesson Overview

The **ICS Organization: Part I** lesson introduces you to the:

- Organizational structure of ICS.
- Five major management functions.
- Use of position titles.
- Roles and responsibilities of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.
- Selection and transfer of Incident Commanders.

Lesson 3 Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the five major management functions in ICS.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.

ICS Structure

The ICS structure is unique but easy to understand. There is no correlation between the ICS structure and the administrative structure of any single agency or organization. This is deliberate, because confusion over different position titles and organizational structures has been a significant stumbling block to effective incident management in the past.

For example, someone who serves as a Department Head every day may not hold that level or area of responsibility when deployed under an ICS structure.

Performance of Management Functions

Every incident or event requires that certain management functions be performed. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for.

Regardless of the size of the incident, these management functions will still apply.

Five Major Management Functions

There are five major management functions that are the foundation upon which the ICS organization develops. These functions apply whether you are handling a routine emergency, organizing for a major non-emergency event, or managing a response to a major disaster. The five major management functions are:

Management Function Descriptions

Below is a brief description of each ICS function:

- **Incident Command:** Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities, and has overall responsibility at the incident or event.
- **Operations:** Conducts tactical operations (such as patient care or clean-up) to carry out the plan. Develops the defined objectives and organization, and directs all tactical resources.
- **Planning:** Prepares and documents the Incident Action Plan to accomplish the objectives, collects and evaluates information, maintains resource status, and maintains documentation for incident records.
- **Logistics:** Provides support, resources, and all other services needed to meet the operational objectives.
- **Finance/Administration:** Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

Organizational Structure – Incident Commander

On small incidents and events, one person, the Incident Commander, may accomplish all five management functions. In fact, the Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed on an incident regardless of its nature. However, large incidents or events may require that these functions be set up as separate Sections within the organization.

Within the ICS organizational structure, the hospital or healthcare system's Director or CEO is referred to as the Agency Executive. The Agency Executive delegates authority over the incident to the Incident Commander, while he or she manages the organization's day-to-day administration. It is important that the Incident Commander manage the incident independently, but still periodically communicate incident status to the Agency Executive.
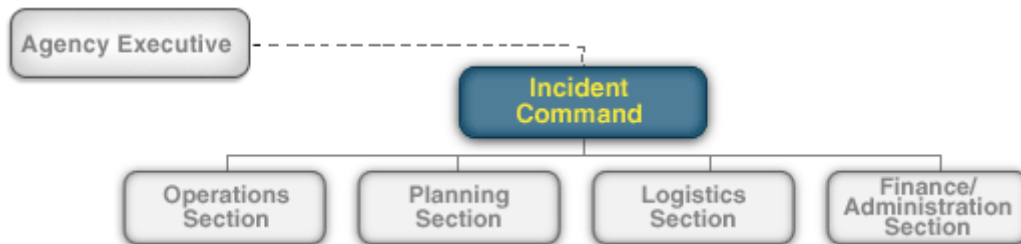
Organizational Structure — ICS Sections

Each of the primary ICS Sections may be subdivided as needed. The ICS organization has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident.

A basic ICS operating guideline is that the person at the top of the organization is responsible until the authority is delegated to another person. Thus, on smaller incidents when these additional persons are not required, the Incident Commander will personally accomplish or manage all aspects of the incident organization.

ICS Position Titles

To maintain span of control, the ICS organization can be divided into many levels of supervision. At each level, individuals with primary responsibility positions have distinct titles. Using specific ICS position titles serves three important purposes:

- Titles provide a common standard for all users. For example, if one agency uses the title Branch Chief, another Branch Manager, etc., this lack of consistency can cause confusion at the incident.
- The use of distinct titles for ICS positions allows for filling ICS positions with the most qualified individuals rather than by seniority.
- Standardized position titles are useful when requesting qualified personnel. For example, in deploying personnel, it is important to know if the positions needed are Unit Leaders, clerks, etc.

Supervisory Position Titles

The titles for all supervisory levels of the organization are shown in the table below.

Organizational Level	Title	Support Position
Incident Command	Incident Commander	Deputy
Command Staff	Officer	Assistant
General Staff (Section)	Chief	Deputy
Branch	Director	Deputy
Division/Group	Supervisor	N/A
Unit	Leader	Manager
Strike Team/Task Force	Leader	Single Resource Boss

Later, you will learn more about the different ICS organizational levels.

Roles and Responsibilities

You should now be familiar with the basic ICS organizational structure and five major management functions.

In this section, you'll learn about the expansion of the ICS organization and the roles and responsibilities of the **Incident Commander and Command Staff**.

Incident Commander's Overall Role

The Incident Commander has overall responsibility for managing the incident by objectives, planning strategies, and implementing tactics. The Incident Commander must be fully briefed and should have a written delegation of authority. Initially, assigning tactical resources and overseeing operations will be under the direct supervision of the Incident Commander.

Personnel assigned by the Incident Commander have the authority of their assigned positions, regardless of the rank they hold within their respective organizations.

"My job is to provide the overall leadership for incident response. I am able to delegate my authority to others to manage the ICS organization. Like any other organization, I have bosses too. I take general direction and receive my delegation of authority from the accountable agency executive. It's important to note that the agency executive may or may not include my real-life boss."

Incident Commander Responsibilities

In addition to having overall responsibility for managing the entire incident, the Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety.
- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders.
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other organizations participating in the incident.

The Incident Commander may appoint one or more Deputies, if applicable, from the same organization or from other organizations or jurisdictions. Deputy Incident Commanders must be as qualified as the Incident Commander.

"As the Incident Commander, I am responsible for all activities and functions until I staff them. So, one of the first things I do is assess my need for staff. I know that for an incident that is both complex and long-term, I will need more staff. In addition, I may decide that I need a Deputy.

"Also, I establish incident objectives for the organization based on the situation and direction given by the agency executive. The type of plan depends on the magnitude of the incident. During a complex incident, I'll direct my staff to develop a written Incident Action Plan. The benefit of ICS is that the organization can be tailored to match the need."

Selecting and Changing Incident Commanders

As incidents expand or contract, change in jurisdiction or discipline, or become more or less complex, command may change to meet the needs of the incident.

Rank, grade, and seniority are not the factors used to select the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is always a highly qualified individual trained to lead the incident response.

As you learned in Lesson 2, formal transfer of command at an incident always requires a transfer of command briefing for the incoming Incident Commander and notification to all personnel that a change in command is taking place.

It is normal for a transfer of command, along with a change in ICS staff, to occur when there is a shift change, or when an operational period ends.

Expanding the Organization

As incidents grow, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to the Command Staff and the General Staff. The Incident Commander will add positions only as needed.
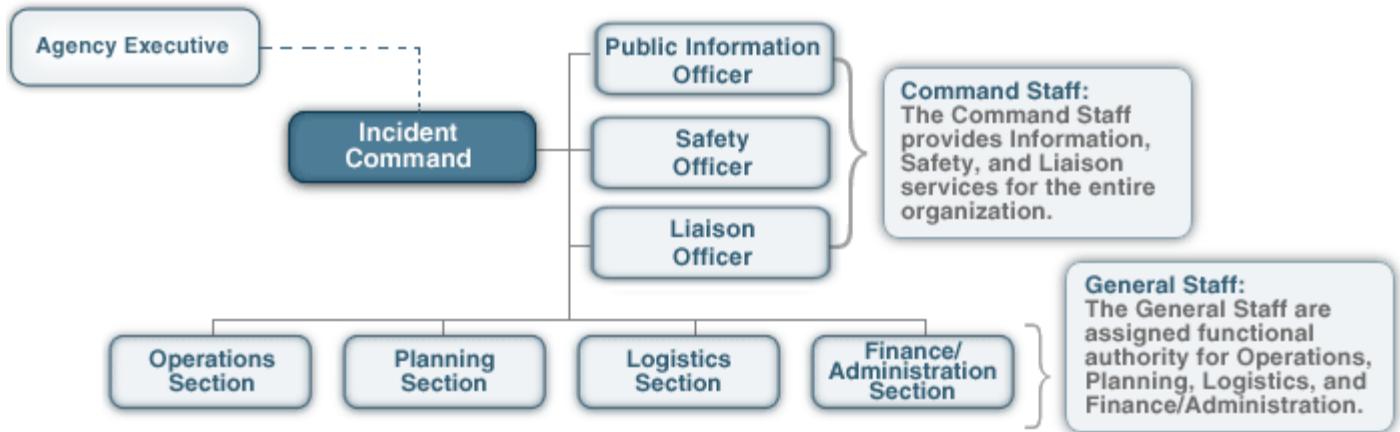
Command Staff

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, it may be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to provide information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization. In ICS, these personnel make up the Command Staff and consist of the:

- **Public Information Officer**, who serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media or other organizations seeking information directly from the incident or event.
- **Safety Officer**, who monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all assigned personnel.
- **Liaison Officer**, who serves as the primary contact for supporting organizations that are assisting at an incident, but are **not** participating within the ICS structure.

The Command Staff reports directly to the Incident Commander.

Public Information Officer
"I report directly to the Incident Commander and advise him or her on issues related to information dissemination and media relations. I am the primary contact for anyone who wants information about the incident and our response to it. I serve both an external audience through the media, and an internal audience including both incident staff and agency personnel. It's very important for me to coordinate with other public information staff to ensure that we do not issue confusing or conflicting information. Since the Planning Section is gathering intelligence and other information, I get a lot of my information from them. Because I get a lot of information from the community, the media, and others, I also provide information to the Planning Section Chief and the Incident Commander.

"Accurate information is essential. In the end, the Incident Commander will approve all information that I release. During a complex incident, I will probably need several Assistant Public Information Officers to help me."

Safety Officer

"My job is to make sure everyone does the job safely and gets home in one piece. I advise the Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety, but I would like to emphasize that safety is everyone's responsibility. I work very closely with Operations to make sure that our people in the field are as safe as possible under the circumstances, including wearing appropriate protective equipment and implementing the safest tactical options. I conduct risk analyses and implement safety measures. I normally do this through the planning process, but I do have the authority to stop any unsafe activity that I observe. While a lot of my attention is focused on Operations, I am also concerned about safety for the rest of the organization. I minimize other employee risks by promoting safe driving habits, eliminating tripping hazards, ensuring safe food handling, things like that. I spend a lot of time out of the command post looking at what's going on. During a complex incident, I will need quite a few assistants to be my eyes and ears."

Liaison Officer

"I'm the go between. I assist the Incident Commander by serving as the point of contact for any supporting organization or agency representatives that are assisting at the incident. My job is to remain visible on the incident to all incoming cooperating and assisting agencies, and other healthcare organizations. I provide briefings to organization and agency representatives, and work with them to address their questions and concerns about the operation. I respond to requests from incident personnel for contacts among the assisting and cooperating agencies and organizations. I also monitor incident operations in order to identify any current or potential problems between supporting organizations. I participate in planning meetings. During a complex incident, I may have a lot of organization and agency representatives, but can usually handle the job myself."

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **ICS Organization: Part I** lesson. The lesson addressed the:

- Organizational structure of ICS.
- Five major management functions.
- Use of position titles.
- Roles and responsibilities of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.
- Selection and transfer of Incident Commanders.

The next lesson will provide an introduction to the General Staff and the expansion and contraction of the ICS organization.

Lesson 4: ICS Organization: Part II

Lesson Overview

The **ICS Organization: Part II** lesson introduces you to the:

- Roles and responsibilities of the General Staff.
- Expansion and contraction of the ICS organization.

Lesson 4 Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the role and function of the Operations Section.
- Describe the role and function of the Planning Section.
- Describe the role and function of the Logistics Section.
- Describe the role and function of the Finance/Administration Section.

General Staff

Expansion of an incident may require the delegation of authority for the performance of the other management functions. The people who perform the other four management functions are designated as the **General Staff**. The General Staff is made up of four **Sections:** Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.
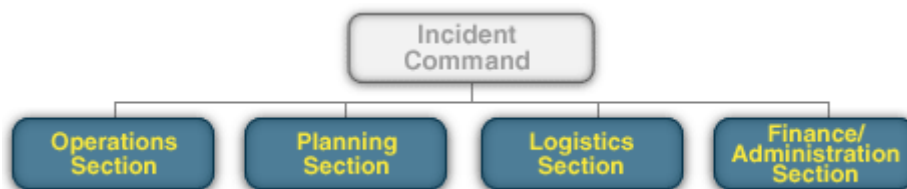
The General Staff reports directly to the Incident Commander.

ICS Section Chiefs and Deputies

As mentioned previously, the person in charge of each Section is designated as a **Chief**. Section Chiefs have the ability to expand their Section to meet the needs of the situation. Each of the Section Chiefs may have a Deputy, or more than one, if necessary. The Deputy:

- May assume responsibility for a specific portion of the primary position, work as relief, or be assigned other tasks.
- Should always be as proficient as the person for whom he or she works.

In large incidents, especially where multiple disciplines or jurisdictions are involved, the use of Deputies from other organizations can greatly increase interagency coordination.

Operations Section

Until Operations is established as a separate Section, the Incident Commander has direct control of tactical resources. The Incident Commander will determine the need for a separate Operations Section at an incident or event. When the Incident Commander activates an Operations Section, he or she will assign an individual as the Operations Section Chief.
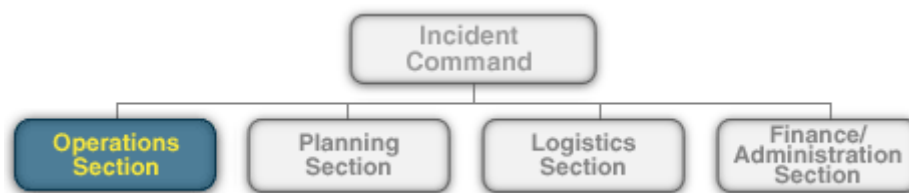
Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief will develop and manage the Operations Section to accomplish the incident objectives set by the Incident Commander. The Operations Section Chief is normally the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand.

Operations Section: Maintaining Span of Control

The Operations function is where the tactical fieldwork is done and the most incident resources are assigned. Often the most hazardous activities are carried out there. The following supervisory levels can be added to help manage span of control:

- **Divisions** are used to divide an incident geographically.
- **Groups** are used to describe functional areas of operation.
- **Branches** are used when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control and can be either geographical or functional.

Operations Section: Divisions

Divisions are used to divide an incident **geographically**. The person in charge of each Division is designated as a **Supervisor**. How the area is divided is determined by the needs of the incident.

The most common way to identify Divisions is by using alphabet characters (A, B, C, etc.). Other identifiers may be used as long as Division identifiers are known by assigned responders.

The important thing to remember about ICS Divisions is that they are established to **divide an incident into geographical areas of operation**.
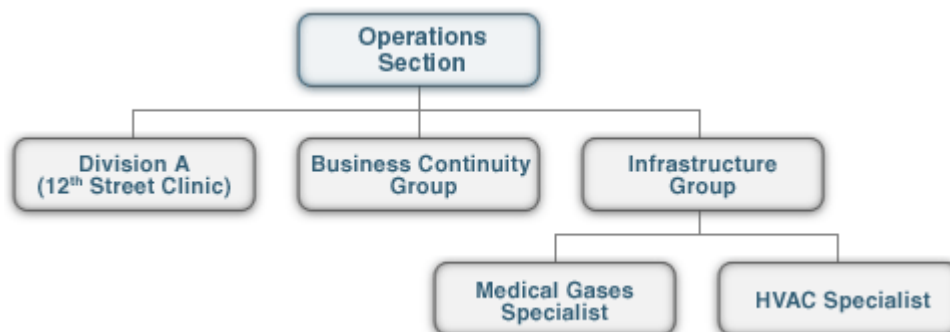
Operations Section: Groups

Groups are used to describe **functional** areas of operation. The person in charge of each Group is designated as a **Supervisor**.

The kind of Group to be established will also be determined by the needs of an incident. Groups are normally labeled according to the job that they are assigned (e.g., Business Continuity Group, Infrastructure Group, etc.). Groups will work wherever their assigned task is needed and are not limited geographically.

Operations Section: Divisions and Groups

Divisions and Groups can be used together on an incident. Divisions and Groups are at an equal level in the organization. One does not supervise the other. When a Group is working within a Division on a special assignment, Division and Group Supervisors must closely coordinate their activities.

Operations Section: Establishing Branches

If the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control, it may be necessary to establish another level of organization within the Operations Section, called **Branches**. The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a **Director**. Deputies may also be used at the Branch level. Branches can be divided into Groups or Divisions — or can be a combination of both.
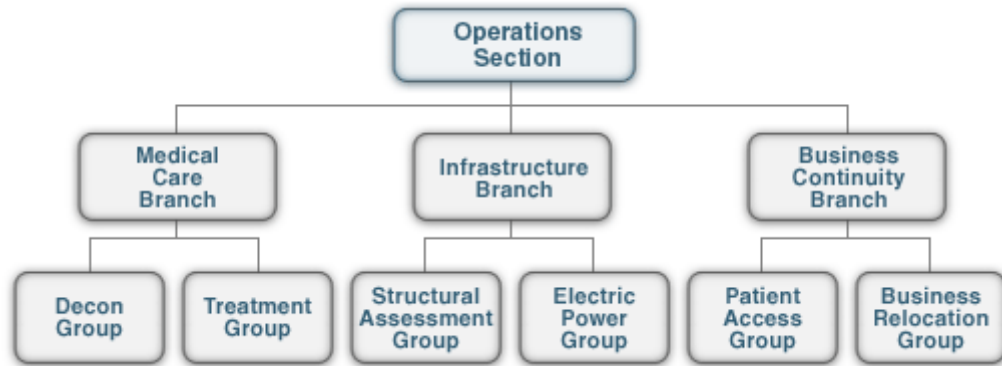
Operations Section: Branches, Other Factors

While span of control is a common reason to establish Branches, additional considerations may also indicate the need to use these Branches, including:

- **Multidiscipline Incidents.** Some incidents have multiple disciplines involved (e.g., Firefighting, Health & Medical, Hazardous Materials, Public Works & Engineering, Energy, etc.) that may create the need to set up incident operations around a functional Branch structure.
- **Multijurisdiction Incidents.** In some incidents it may be better to organize the incident around jurisdictional lines. In these situations, Branches may be set up to reflect jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Very Large Incidents.** Very large incidents may be organized using geographic or functional Branches.

Managing the Operations Section

While there are any number of ways to organize field responses, Branches and Groups may be used to organize resources and maintain span of control.

Operations Section: Expanding and Contracting

The organization within the Operations Section reflects the objectives and usually develops from the bottom up and may include:

- **Task Forces:** A combination of mixed resources with common operating communications supervised by a Task Force Leader.
- **Strike Teams:** A set number of resources of the same kind and type supervised by a Strike Team Leader.
- **Single Resources:** May be individuals, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor.

Planning Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Planning Section and designate a Planning Section Chief. If no Planning Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all planning functions. It is up to the Planning Section Chief to activate any needed additional staffing.

Planning Section: Major Activities

The major activities of the Planning Section may include:

- Collecting, evaluating, and displaying incident information.
- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans.
- Conducting long-range and/or contingency planning.
- Developing plans for demobilization.
- Maintaining incident documentation.
- Tracking resources assigned to the incident.

Planning Section: Units

The Planning Section can be further staffed with four Units. In addition, Technical Specialists who provide special expertise useful in incident management and response may also be assigned to work in the Planning Section. Depending on the needs, Technical Specialists may also be assigned to other Sections in the organization.

- **Resources Unit:** Conducts all check-in activities and maintains the status of all incident resources. The Resources Unit plays a significant role in preparing the written Incident Action Plan.
- **Situation Unit:** Collects and analyzes information on the current situation, prepares situation displays and situation summaries, and develops maps and projections.
- **Documentation Unit:** Provides duplication services, including the written Incident Action Plan. Maintains and archives all incident-related documentation.
- **Demobilization Unit:** Assists in ensuring that resources are released from the incident in an orderly, safe, and cost-effective manner.

Logistics Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Logistics Section at the incident, and designate an individual to fill the position of the Logistics Section Chief. If no Logistics Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all logistical functions. The size of the incident, complexity of support needs, and the incident length will determine whether a separate Logistics Section is established. Additional staffing is the responsibility of the Logistics Section Chief.


Logistics Section: Major Activities

The Logistics Section is responsible for all of the services and support needs, including:

- Ordering, obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- Providing communication planning and resources.
- Setting up food services.
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities.
- Providing support transportation.
- Providing medical services to incident personnel.

Logistics Section: Branches and Units

The Logistics Section can be further staffed by two Branches and six Units.

Not all of the Units may be required; they will be established based on need. The titles of the Units are descriptive of their responsibilities.
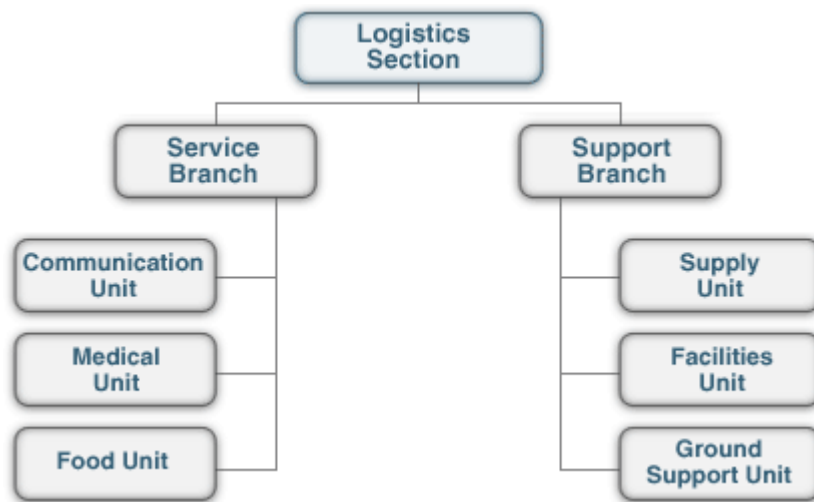

The Logistics Service Branch can be staffed to include a:

- **Communication Unit:** Prepares and implements the Incident Communication Plan (ICS-205), distributes and maintains communications equipment, supervises the Incident Communications Center, and establishes adequate communications over the incident.
- **Medical Unit:** Develops the Medical Plan (ICS-206), provides first aid and light medical treatment for personnel assigned to the incident, and prepares procedures for a major medical emergency. It does **not** provide medical care for the public.
- **Food Unit:** Supplies the food and potable water for all incident facilities and personnel, and obtains the necessary equipment and supplies to operate food service facilities.
- **Supply Unit:** Determines the type and amount of supplies needed to support the incident. The Unit orders, receives, stores, and distributes supplies, and services nonexpendable equipment. All resource orders are placed through the Supply Unit. The Unit maintains inventory and accountability of supplies and equipment.
- **Facilities Unit:** Sets up and maintains required facilities to support the incident.
- **Ground Support Unit:** Prepares the Transportation Plan. Arranges for, activates, and documents the fueling, maintenance, and repair of ground resources. Arranges for the transportation of personnel, supplies, food, and equipment.

Finance/Administration Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Finance/Administration Section at the incident and designate an individual to fill the position of the Finance/Administration Section Chief.

If no Finance/Administration Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all finance functions.
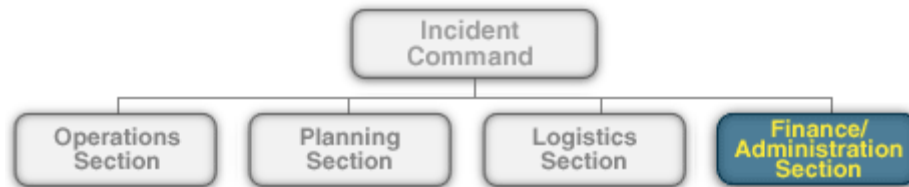
Finance/Administration Section: Major Activities

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that requires incident-specific financial management. The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

- Contract negotiation and monitoring.
- Timekeeping.
- Cost analysis.
- Compensation for injury or damage to property.

Finance/Administration Section: Increasing Use

More and more, larger incidents are using a Finance/Administration Section to monitor costs. Smaller incidents may also require certain Finance/Administration support.

For example, the Incident Commander may establish one or more Units of the Finance/Administration Section for such things as procuring special equipment, contracting with a vendor, or making cost estimates for alternative response strategies.

Finance/Administration Section: Units

The Finance/Administration Section may staff four Units. Not all Units may be required; they will be established based on need.
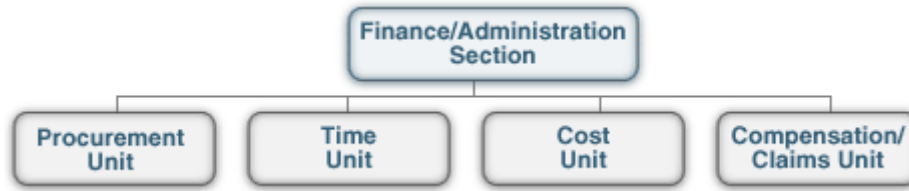
- **Procurement Unit:** Responsible for administering all financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts, leases, and fiscal agreements.
- **Time Unit:** Responsible for incident personnel time recording.
- **Cost Unit:** Collects all cost data, performs cost effectiveness analyses, provides cost estimates, and makes cost savings recommendations.
- **Compensation/Claims Unit:** Responsible for the overall management and direction of all administrative matters pertaining to compensation for injury and claims related activities kept for the incident.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **ICS Organization: Part II** lesson. This lesson addressed the:

- Roles and responsibilities of the General Staff.
- Expansion and contraction of the ICS organization.